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FOLK-LORE

A QUARTERLY REVIEW

OF

MYTH, TRADITION, INSTITUTION, & CUSTOM

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BEING

THE TRANSACTIONS OF THE FOLK-LORE SOCIETY

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THE BIRD CULT OF EASTER ISLAND.

104

BY MRS. SCORESBY ROUTLEDGE.

(From a paper read before the Society, 16th May, 1917.)

PLACES AND TERMS CONNECTED WITH THE CULT.

Rano Kao. Western volcano, site of bird cult.

Hatuveri. Village at foot of Rano Kao.

Orongo. Village at summit of Rano Kao.

Hata-ngarau. Carved rocks and houses, concluding part of Orongo.

Motu Nui. Islet at foot of Rano Kao, home of birds.

Rano Raraku. Eastern volcano, site of image quarries.

Orahiki, South-western corner of Rano Raraku.

Kotau (or Otuu). Western half of island.

Hotu-iti. Eastern half of island.

Hata-toa. Supreme clan—Victor.

Hata-kio. Subservient clans.

Ao. Clan celebrating bird rites, also an emblem.

Tangata-manu. Bird-man.

Hopu. Servant who procured the egg.

Iviatua. Man or woman supernaturally gifted.

Tangata-rongo-rongo. Man acquainted with the tablets.

Takó. Retreat on Motu Nui, object unknown.

Manu mo te Poki. Bird ceremony for the child.

Tangata-tapa-manu. Officiator at the child ceremony.

Manu-tara. The sacred bird, a species of tern.

Pin. The young manu-tara.

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EASTER ISLAND in the South-East Pacific, remained in its primitive state, save in so far as it was affected by the visits of passing ships, till the year 1863. At that date a large number of its most distinguished inhabitants were carried away by Peruvian slave raiders or died from a subsequent epidemic of small-pox; the following year the first Christian missionary settled on the island; he was rapidly followed by a series of European exploiters and the old order passed. The information which follows was obtained from the few surviving natives who can remember their life in its earlier condition prior to the above events. It is never easy to procure from uneducated persons a straightforward and accurate statement, even when the events in question are recent and well within their knowledge, it is even harder when some of the facts are forgotten or only vaguely remembered, so that a speaker glides almost unconsciously from what is known to what is merely conjectured; the difficulty of research was in this case further augmented through its being begun with preconceived ideas, obtained from the brief allusions of earlier writers, which subsequently proved to be erroneous. The work was necessarily a matter of time; it was not, for instance, till the Expedition had been a year on the island that the story transpired of the bird-man's residence on Rano Raraku, though once heard it was found to be well known. The whole material available has not yet been examined and some changes may be necessary; what is claimed is that the evidence was very carefully obtained and weighed and that the story as given is believed to be substantially correct; but experience in field work here and elsewhere has induced a firm conviction that accuracy in anthropological work is never more than a comparative term. The account will be given first in general terms, and deviations or exceptions subsequently noted. With regard to the evidence at our disposal, information was obtained from

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some twelve different authorities, of whom four had been bird-men, three had served as "hopu," and one had acted in both capacities. We had camps at both Mataveri and Rano Raraku, we visited Orongo more than twenty times with different native escorts, and we were three times on the islet of Motu Nui. The Expedition was over sixteen months on the island.

Easter Island is renowned for its gigantic images, many of which stood on the burial places round the coast and were erected on the slopes of the mountain whence they were hewn, while large numbers still remain in the quarries in an unfinished state. The why and wherefore of these things is lost in mist of antiquity. There is, however, another and less known cult of the island which survived till living memory; it is noteworthy for its own sake, and it is doubly interesting if it can be proved to have had at least some connection with the great statues: this is the Bird Cult.

The population of Easter Island was divided into ten clans or "mata," which are frequently spoken of in two groups, those of Kotuu and those of Hotu-iti, districts which may be simply if roughly identified with the Western and Eastern portions of the island; legend tells of fierce wars between the rival parties. The clan which was in the ascendency at any given time, or the "Mata-toa," had the right to obtain the first egg of a certain migratory sea bird, but two or more clans are often found combining; the members of other clans, or the Mata-kio, might be present in the capacity of servants. The Mata-toa had a claim on the Mata-kio for boat building and food planting and "they were afraid to refuse." How this primary position was originally attained it is not very easy to say, presumably by superior strength; it might be held for one year or for several in succession and was said to be passed on at will to a favoured neighbour. The selection gave rise at times to heartburning: it is told that a man of

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794 the Marama clan set fire to the house of the head of the
614 Miru clan because the Miru had given the coveted distinction
554 to the Ngaure instead of to his own people. An aggrieved
[578] clan had its remedy through war.[1] The Mata-toa when taking part in the bird ceremonies are spoken of as the "Ao," thus "Miru te Ao" signifies that the Miru were the celebrants that year; the same name is given to an
[582] actual object in the shape of a large paddle used in dancing, the handle of which was adorned with a human face.
133 The island is triangular in shape, with its apex to the
794 north, and the bird ceremonies were especially connected
36[illegible] with the western angle. This portion is formed by an extinct volcano known as Rano Kao, and in October the Mata-toa, or a certain number of them, men, women and children, took up their abode in a number of houses at the foot of the mountain on the landward side. The place is called Mataveri and the removal there was known as "Kaho Mataveri ki te Ao," or "to go to Mataveri for
794 the Ao." The houses were made after the fashion of the
342 island, as a superstructure of sticks and reed on a boat-
266 shaped foundation of stone, and here great cannibal feasts were held; tradition relates that so big were the houses that one of the victims escaped by hiding in an extreme end. Similar gruesome feasts took place to the accompaniment of breaking waves in a sea cave near at hand, which still bears the name of "Ana-kai-tangata," or
[532] "Cave eat man"; the roof is covered with paintings of birds in red and white pigment, one of which is superimposed on a drawing of a European ship and cannot,
794 therefore, be earlier than the eighteenth century. For

[113] [1] Since writing the above Dr. Corney has located the interesting accounts of the first missionaries, published in *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*. Their knowledge of the Bird cult is vague, but they were specially impressed with the tumult which resulted between different parties after the finding of the egg in the month of September. It must be remembered that their acquaintance with the island was subsequent to the disorganization caused by the Peruvian raid.

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the bird celebrations, in addition to a particular dress and hat, the men carried the "ao" and the women wore the "remiro," a breast ornament only used by a woman whose husband was of the Mato-toa. The wooden images, "moai toromiro," were hung around the neck. A function connected with the young birds took place in October or November, but will be more conveniently spoken of later.

In July the Ao left Mataveri and wound their way up to the top of the mountain by a track still just traceable and known as "the road of the Ao." Rano Kao is some thirteen hundred feet in height and has a crater about a mile in width; the landward side is a grassy slope, but the three sides which are surrounded by sea have been gradually eroded till they form a steep and precipitous cliff of about one thousand feet. So far has this erosion proceeded that the sea has nearly worn its way into the crater itself, which is at the present time only separated from it by a wall of rock along which it would be feasible but not easy to walk. In this process of attrition some harder portions of rock have been left and form three little islands lying off the coast. Standing on the western extremity of the mountain with the narrow ridge immediately on the left, the crater behind and the cliff in front, these islets are seen far below, always girdled with breaking surf from the swell of the Pacific, which here extends in an unbroken sweep to the Antarctic. To-day no sound is heard save the cries of the sea birds as they circle round these their habitations.

The company of the Ao proceeded by the western side of the crater along its ever-narrowing summit till this spot on the cliff was reached, which is known as Orongo. Here houses were again awaiting them, but unlike those at Mataveri they were constructed of stone laminae, lined and roofed with slabs and covered with earth; such structures were obviously more suitable for so windy a spot than those made of reeds. The entrance, which is always toward

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794 361 342 the sea, is by a narrow passage through the thickness of the wall, along which it is just possible to crawl. The slabs opposite the doorway, and where consequently there is a certain amount of light, are often painted; the ao appears on them, also bird designs and frequently representations of European ships. In the middle of the village is the house in which stood the image now at the British Museum, the front of which had to be broken down before the statue could be removed. The image is typical in form, but to find one under cover and in such a position is absolutely unique; its name, "Hoa-haka-nanaia," is roughly translated as "the wave turns over and breaks"; the word Taura-renga is also associated with it, sometimes being applied to the house and sometimes to the image. The village terminates as it approaches the narrowest part of the cliff amongst a number of carved rocks, between which a semicircle of small houses have been built; in some cases the houses cover the carving, which is evidently the older. These dwellings were occupied during the festival by the "tangata rongo-rongo," or the men who recited from the hieroglyphic tablets which form one of the mysteries of the island; half the houses were apportioned to the savants from Kotuu, the other half to those from Hotu-iti. "They chanted all day; they stopped an hour to eat, that was all." This group of rocks and dwellings is known as "Mata-ngarau," and was tabou during the festival to the common herd.

794 361 532

794 538

[784]

794 [261] There are in the whole settlement forty-six houses, of which many are practically intact, while others have been ruined in the endeavour to obtain the painted slabs within. The Ao spent the time while awaiting the birds in dancing each day in front of the buildings, food being brought to them from below, where, according to one authority, a friendly clan kept watch at Mataveri. A short way down the cliff immediately below Orongo is a cave known as "Haka-ronga-manu," or "The cave of

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listening for the birds"; here men kept watch day and night for news from the islet below.

The privilege of obtaining the first egg was a matter of competition between members of the Mata-toa, but the right to be one of the competitors was secured only by supernatural means. An "iviatua," a divinely-gifted individual, dreamed that a certain man was favoured by the gods, so that if he entered for the race he would be a winner, or, in technical parlance, become a bird-man or "tangata manu"; it was also ordained that he should then take a new name, which formed part of the revelation, and this bird-name was given to the year in which victory was achieved, thus forming an easily remembered system of chronology. The nomination might be taken up at once or not for many years; and if not used by the original nominee it might descend to his son or grandson; one case was mentioned where a young man who was victorious passed on the honours to an older relative. If a man did not win he might try again or "say that the iviatua was a liar" and retire from the contest. Women were never nominated, but the iviatua might be male or female and, needless to say, was rewarded with presents of food. There were four gods, or "atua," connected with the eggs—Hawa-tuu-take-take, called "chief of the eggs," and Make-make, who were male deities; also Vie Hoa, the wife of Hawa, and Vie Kenatea, who were females; each of these four had a servant whose names were given and who were also supernatural beings. Two iviatua "called themselves after Hawa and Make-make" respectively, but this seems to have been exceptional. Those going to take the eggs recited the names of the gods before meat, inviting them to partake. The actual competitors were men of importance and spent their time with the rest of the Ao at the village of Orongo; they selected servants to represent them and await the coming of the birds in less comfortable quarters in the islet below.

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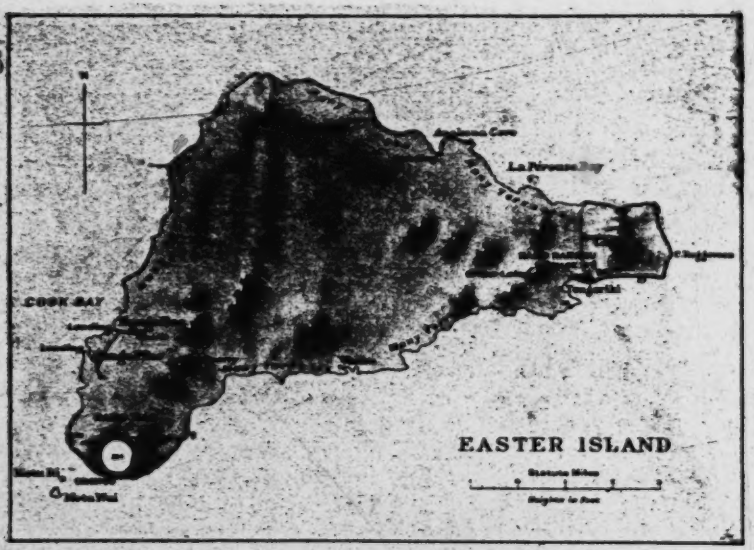

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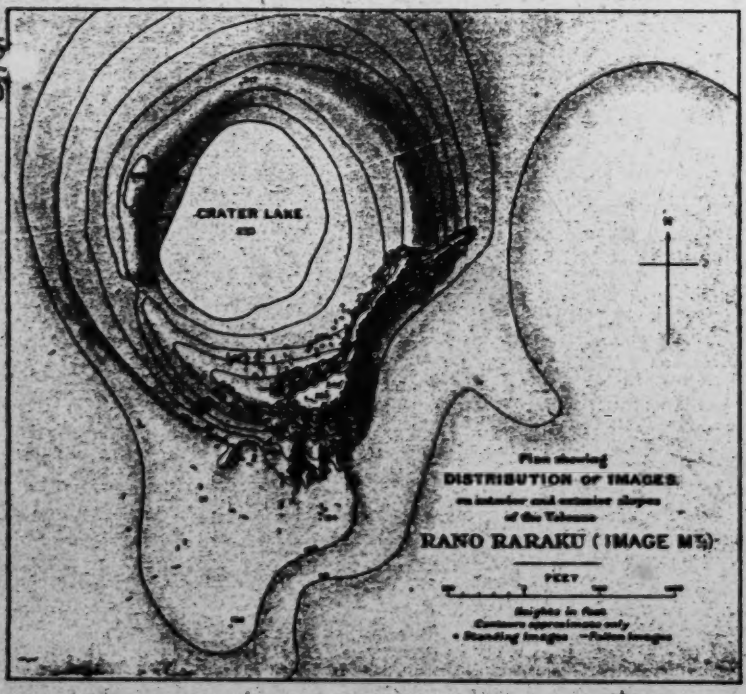

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[facing p. 344]

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These men, who were known as "hopu," went to the islet when the Ao went up to Orongo or possibly rather later, Each made up his provisions into a "pora," or securely bound bundle of reeds, he then swam on the top of the packet, holding it with one arm and propelling himself with the remaining arm and both legs. An incantation, which was recited to us, was said by him before starting. In one instance, the iviatua, at the same time that he gave the nomination, prophesied that the year that it was taken up a man should be eaten by a large fish; the original recipient never availed himself of it, but on his deathbed told his son of the prophecy. The son, Kilimuti, undeterred by it, entered for the race and sent two men to the islet; one of them started to swim there with his pora but was never heard of again, and it was naturally said that the prophecy had been fulfilled. Kilimuti wasted no regret over the eventuality, obtained another servant and secured the egg; he died while the Expedition was on the island. The islet of Motu Nui is, as its name signifies, the largest, and is also the outermost of the three islets which lie off the coast of Rano Kao. It can only be reached in fine weather, and even then it is no easy matter to gain the particular ledge of rock where landing has to be made on the crest of a wave before the sea again retreats boiling and surging many feet below. Once landed, however, the surface is comparatively level and presents no difficulties. It is about five acres in extent and is covered by coarse grass which almost conceals the entrance to the cave in which the hopu lived while awaiting the coming of the birds; the inside however is light and airy; it measures nineteen feet by thirteen, with a height of over five feet, and conspicuous among other carvings in the centre of the wall is a large ao more than seven feet in length. A line dividing the islet between Kotuu and Motu-iti passed through the centre of the cave, and the hopu are said to have formerly kept to their respective

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sides. As bad weather might prevent fresh consignments of food during the weeks of waiting, the men carefully dried on the rocks the skins of the bananas and potatoes which they had brought with them, to be consumed in case of necessity, and it was added with a touch appreciated by those acquainted with the Easter Island, that if the man who thus practised foresight was not careful others who had no food would steal it when he was not looking.

In addition to the "manu-tara," or sacred bird, which is a species of tern, the natives say that seven other kinds of birds, whose names they gave, inhabit Motu Nui; three of these were said to stop all the year round, two to come for the winter, and three, including the tara, for the summer. No good reason was given for the selection of the tara; its cry is its most marked peculiarity; the approach of the flight can be heard for miles and the noise during nesting is said to be deafening; in a cave on the islet there is an incised drawing of the bird with open beak from which a series of lines spreads out fanwise, obviously representing the volume of sound. Names in imitation of these sounds were given to children, such as "Piriuru," "Wero-wero," "Ka-ara-ara." It is worth noting that the coming of the tara inaugurates the deep-sea fishing season; till their arrival all fish living in twenty or thirty fathoms were considered poisonous. The birds arrived in September and on first alighting tarried only a short time; immediately on their departure the hopu rushed out to find the egg, or, according to another account, it was the rushing out of the hopu which frightened away the birds. The gods intervened in the hunt, so that the man who was not destined to win went past the egg even when it lay right in his path. The first finder rushed up to the highest point of the islet calling to his employer by name, "Shave your head, you have got the egg." The cry was taken up by the watchers in the cave on the mainland, and the fortunate victor, beside himself with joy, proceeded to

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794 have his head and paint it red, while the losers showed their grief unrestrainedly. The defeated hopu started at once to swim to the shore, while the winner, who was obliged to fast while the egg was in his possession, put it in a little basket, and going down to the landing rock dipped it into the sea; the significance of the word hopu is "wash." He then tied the basket round his forehead and was able to swim quickly, as the gods were with him. At this stage sometimes accidents occurred, for if the sea was rough an unlucky swimmer might be dashed on the rocks and killed; in one instance, it was said, only one man escaped with his life, owing, as he reported, to his having been warned by Maké-maké not to make the attempt. When the hopu arrived on the mainland he handed over the egg to his employer, and a tangata-rongo-rongo tied round the arm which had taken it a piece of red tapa and also of a tree, now extinct, known as "gnau-gnau," reciting meanwhile the appropriate words. The finding was announced by a fire being lit on the landward side of the summit of Rano Kao on one of two sites, according to whether the Mata-toa came from the west or east side of the island.

794 532 Reference has been made to the carved rocks which terminate the village of Orongo; they are considerably weathered and require study in varying lights to realize the forms represented. By far the most numerous of these is the figure of a man with the head of a bird; it is in a crouching attitude with the hands held up and is carved at every size and angle according to the surface of the rock. It can still be counted one hundred and eleven times and many instances must have disappeared. All knowledge of its meaning is lost; the figure may have represented one of the egg gods, but it seems more probable that each one was a memorial to a bird-man, and this presumption is strengthened by the fact that in at least three of the carvings the hand is holding an egg. The history of

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another carving, a small design which is also very frequent, still survives and corroborates this by analogy; within living memory it was the custom for women of the island to come up here and be immortalized by having one of these representations cut on the rock by a professional expert. We know therefore that conventional forms were used as memorials of certain definite persons.[1]

The bird-man, having obtained the egg, took it in his hand, palm upwards, on a piece of tappa and danced with a rejoicing company down the slope of Rano Kao and along the southern coast. This procedure, which is known as "haka epa," or "make shelf," from the position of the hand with regard to the egg, was continued till the party reached Rano Raraku, the mountain especially connected with the images. This mountain is at the south-east end of the island, some ten miles distant from Rano Kao; it resembles the latter in being an extinct volcano with a crater lake, but stands back a mile from the coast and is only about 500 feet in height; its shape is that of a shallow vessel of which the base is larger than the brim.[2] On the south side of the mountain, towards the summit, are extensive workings in which lie scores of images in every stage of evolution. These quarries are both within the crater and outside, and below them, on the debris and detritus, a large number of the figures have been set up. Amongst the statues thus placed on the exterior slope, most of which are still standing, there is shown at the south-west corner the foundations of a house. This is the point which would first be approached from the southern coast, and in this house the bird-man remained

[1] This figure with that of the bird-man and the ao are all roughly carved on the back of the statue at the British Museum. They appear to be later workmanship than the raised ring and girdle to which allusion is made below. Unfortunately, the light in the portico is bad.

[2] The word "Rano" signifies a crater lake. It is, according to Turner, Malagasy for water, but is only used in Easter Island in the restricted sense.

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for a year, five months of which were spent in strict taboo. The egg which was still kept on tappa was hung up inside the house and blown on the third day, a morsel of tapa being put inside. The victor did not wash and spent his time in "sleeping all day, only coming out to sit in the shade." His correct head-dress was a crown made of human hair; it was known as "hau oho," and if it was not worn the "spirits would be angry."

The house was divided into two, the other half being occupied by a man, who was called an iviatua, but was of an inferior type from the one gifted with prophecy and apparently merely a poor relation of the hero; there were two cooking places, as even he might not share that of the Bird-man. Food was brought as gifts, especially the first sugar-cane, and these offerings seem to have been the sole practical advantage of victory; those who did not contribute were apt to have their houses burnt. The Bird-man's wife came to Raraku but dwelt apart, as for the first five months she could not enter her husband's house nor he hers on pain of death. A few yards below the bird-house is an "ahu" or burial place; it consists merely of a low rough wall built into the mountain with the ground above levelled and paved; it was reserved for the burial of bird-men; corpses in Easter Island were frequently exposed, not buried, but a bird-man was an uncanny person whose ghost might do unpleasant things, he was safer hidden under stones. The name Orohié is given to the whole of this corner of the mountain with its houses, its ahu and its statues. As the Bird-man gazed lazily forth from the shade of his house there stretched away in front of him the low rocky coast marked by a white line of surf and ending in the swelling side and precipitous cliff of Rano Kao, the scene of his triumph. Above him, as he sat there, were the quarries with their unfinished work, below him were the bones of his dead predecessors, while on every hand giant images stood

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for ever in stolid calm. It is difficult to escape from the question, Were the statues on the mountain those of bird-men?

The hopu also retired into private life; if he were of the Mata-toa he could come to Orohié, but he might also reside in his own house, which was in that case divided by a partition through which food was passed; it might not be eaten with his right hand as that had taken the egg. Gifts of food were supplied for three months by his late employer, but he could not eat them on pain of death; they were therefore forwarded to others. The same rule applied to any present from the hopu to the bird-man. His wife and children were also kept in seclusion and forbidden to associate with others.

The new Mata-toa had meanwhile taken up their abode at Mataveri, the egg being, it was said, handed to them for a few minutes as a sign of succession. From here a few weeks after their arrival they went formally to Motu Nui to obtain the young manu-tara, known from their cry as "piu." After the brief visit of the birds when the first egg was laid they absented themselves from the islet for a period varyingly reported as from three days to a month; on their return they laid plentifully and as soon as the nestlings were hatched the Mata-toa carried them to the mainland, swimming with them in baskets bound round the forehead after the manner of the first egg. They were then taken in procession round the island, or, according to another account, as far as Orohié. It was not until the "piu" had been obtained that it was permissible to eat the egg, the period of commencement being known as "Toro," and they were then consumed by the Mata-kio only, not by the Mata-toa; the first two or three eggs, it was explained, were given to god, to eat them would prove fatal. Some of the young manu-tara were kept in confinement till they were full grown, when a piece of red tapa was tied round the wing and leg and they were

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194 told "Kaho ki te hiva," "Go to the world outside"; there was no objection to eating the young birds. The tara departed from Motu Nui about March, but a few stragglers remained; we saw one bird and obtained eggs at the beginning of July, but the natives failed to get any for us in August. When in the following spring the new Bird-man had achieved his egg, he brought it to Orohié and was given the old one which he buried in a gourd in a cranny of Rano Raraku; he then took the place of his predecessor, who returned to his ordinary life.

194 While the foregoing may be described as the accepted
198 procedure in connection with the finding of the first egg,
192 it must not, as will readily be understood, be regarded as absolutely fixed and unvarying—the ceremonial of even an English Coronation is subject to alteration. Also before the end the cult admittedly degenerated and residence at Orongo was abandoned. Some years the race was a "walk over" for one man, the remaining competitors having been squared; on other occasions the finders of further eggs in the hunt beside the absolute first one were allowed to count as bird-men.[1] In this last case the year was said, in answer to a question, to be known by the name of the name of the first finder, all the eggs being finally disposed of in one gourd. It was very definitely volunteered that this plurality was a late development, that originally there was only one bird-man each year. When there were thus several winners one hopu used sometimes to act for more than one employer; a single employer also might have more than one hopu. The fourth year before the final end seems to have been very much "go as you please," for four clans took part and there were ten winners; two hopu had two employers each, and three bird-men took their own eggs, one also acting for another man. With regard to the disposal of the egg one old man said that it was not

[1] This accounts for the large number of bird-men still surviving, see above.

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always hidden in a hole; it might be thrown into the sea or kept and buried with the bird-man. The place of residence for the taboo period was also subject to variation. Orohié was mentioned with pre-eminence, but there were other bird-houses on the Raraku slope and one on the adjoining ahu of Tongariki, some used more particularly when there was more than one bird-man; it transpired also that it was permissible for a man to remain in his own place though he could not stay in his own dwelling; in most of the larger settlements, which would be those with important image ahus, there was a house specially appointed for the residence of the local bird-man should he so elect, but this may have been a later development. The bird-men of the Western clans had a special Mecca in Anakena on the north coast, where the annual inspection of the tablets took place, and an adjoining spot; they went there in all the cases which could be quoted, with the exception of two or three who took up their abode at Raraku, but it was said by three authorities that these places were only resorted to when there was war between the clans and the western men dared not venture into the eastern territory of Orohié. It is a tempting surmise that the quarries and statues inside the Raraku crater, which is entered by a road from the west, may have been associated originally with the Western clans, and those outside the mountain with the Eastern. If so it is not improbable that, owing to internicine war, the work in the crater was suspended first, which would account for the much smaller number of completed statues found inside the crater.[1]

The last year which the Ao went to Orongo, which is known as "Rokunga," appears to have been 1866 or 1867. The names of twelve subsequent years are given during

[1] Thirty statues have been erected inside the crater against some fifty-five outside, exclusive of those around the base, which appear to have formed the approach.

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which the competition for the egg continued and it was still taken to be interred at Raraku. The cult thus survived in a mutilated form the conversion of the island to Christianity, which was completed in 1868, and even the assembly of the remains of the clans into one place which took place about the same time; but it was finally crushed by the secular exploiters of the island, whose house is built at Mataveri with the foundation stones of the cannibal habitations. The request to be given the names of as many bird years as could be remembered met with an almost embarrassing response, eighty-six being quoted straight away; some of these may be the official names of bird-men and not represent a year, but they probably do so in most cases. Chronological sequence was achieved with fair certainty for eleven years prior to Rokunga, and in each case, in addition to the bird-name, the winner's own name was obtained as well as his clan and his family or sub-division; the hopu's name was also ascertained and his clan and subdivision. This list, though it doubtless is not complete, stood reasonably well the test of re-examination and extraneous evidence. Further back, though there is every reason to suppose that the year names given are authentic, the clans and other data supplied were not so reliable. The names of the iviatua who prophesied the event have not survived in the same manner.[1]

Legend relates that the manu-tara were not originally on Motu Nui. They lived, it is said, at one time, on a rock off the east end of the island, but every one came and ate them, so Hawa and Maké-maké sent them to a place on the mainland on the south coast, but still every one ate them; then they went up to the top of Rano Kao on the opposite side of the crater from Orongo and here was held the first festival; finally the birds went to Motu Nui.

[1] This folk-memory for bird chronicles is in curious contrast with the impossibility experienced in obtaining any satisfactory list of the "ariki" or chiefs, though they are said to have been only thirty in number.

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In addition to the finding of the first egg two other ceremonies were mentioned in connection with Orongo and Motu Nui: they were known as "Manu" and "Také" and frequently spoken of together, but to obtain detailed information was a matter of great difficulty. On the subject of Také I have notes of twenty conversations with nine different persons, none of which was really satisfactory; it finally transpired that no first-hand knowledge existed as the rites had been abandoned thirty years before the coming of the missionaries and not as the result of their teaching. All that can be safely said is that those concerned went into retreat on Motu Nui, living, it was stated, in the cave where the hopu awaited the birds; the period was generally given as three months. A vigorous discussion took place on the subject between the oldest man and woman on the island seated on a log in the garden of the old lady; she was positive, in agreement with other authorities, that také was for children, "the boys and girls went in a canoe to the island"; he firmly adhered to the statement that his father went for také after he, the son, was born. The only remaining native who knew anything of the art of hieroglyphic writing stated that také formed the subject of one of the tablets and drew one of its figures, which bears no resemblance to any other known symbol.

Information since acquired of practices elsewhere in the Pacific has suggested the possibility that the retreat was in connection with tattooing and not directly with the bird cult. In some confirmation of this tattooing is stated to have been practised at Mata-Gnarau, the carved rocks of Orongo, and a folk-tale speaks of the earliest exponents of the art as living in a specified cave, not that of the hopu, on Motu Nui. The practice was admittedly on the down grade even before the cataclysm of the sixties.

The details of Manu were more satisfactory. It was known as "Te manu mo te poki," or "the bird for the child," and the child so initiated became a "poki manu,"

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794 or "bird child." No specific benefit was alleged to result from it, but a child whose parents had not performed the ceremony, and whose love affairs for instance went wrong, might even kill his father in revenge for the omission. An expert, known as "tangata tapa manu," the man who, as Dr. Marett would tell us, "knew the right things to say," was called in and given a hen's egg; on this last point much stress was laid; he was at the same time told the child's name, which was subsequently inserted in the ritual. The child was shaved and adorned with white bands and hung round with coco-nuts, or, as these were not readily obtainable in Easter Island, with pieces of wood carved to represent them called "tahonga." A number of children each with an expert then went up to Orongo, as the correct month was December, the Ao were not yet there. An old man, Jotefa, on whose final account I principally rely, stated that he and nine other children with their parents and ten tangata-tapa-manu, and bringing ten chickens, went to Orongo from his home on the north coast, a distance of some eleven miles. The party danced in front of all the houses, went to the carved rocks at the end, and coming back stood in a semicircle in front of the door of Taura-renga, the house of the statue, the experts being behind and all singing; no offering was made to the image; according to another account the parents and children went on the roof of the house, the experts being below, and the parents gave chickens to the men. Jotefa's party returned to their home, had a feast, and gave more food to the professionals. The tangata-tapa-manu subsequently repeated the ritual at any "koros" (a special kind of festival), which were being held in the island, and the object apparently being to make public the child's initiation. If it was not possible to go to Orongo the ceremony could take place at any of the big ahu with images. An old woman who came from near Raraku said with much pride that she was a "poki manu," she

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and her three younger sisters had been taken at the same time to the ahu of Orohié; both parents went and the mother took two chickens, one in each hand, and the mother and children stood upright and the maori sang; they did not go to Orongo because there was war. A drawing was made for us of the poki manu in ceremonial attire, from which it appears that concentric circles of white pigment were made on the child's back and also one on each buttock. A circle in the same position is seen on the back of both the stone and wooden images, and in the case of one stone statue, which had been buried in the sand, was also found on the buttocks.

We have at present, therefore, the following evidence connecting the Bird Cult with the images: the bird-man spent his official year on the mountain where they were quarried, the bird initiation for children was performed in connection with statues and the ring design on the back of the images was reproduced for the ceremony on the back of the children. The old people recognized the rings and girdle of the images as a tattoo design of their youth, and it was volunteered that it was especially affected by tangata-tapa-manu. Above all, we have the fact that in a place of honour in the village of Orongo, which was solely devoted to the Bird Cult, is a typical image. It appears then evident that the people who originally celebrated the Bird Cult included in it reverence for the statues. The ancestors of the present inhabitants were, therefore, either the makers of the monoliths of Easter Island, or, if the bird worshippers represent a more recent immigration, the old religion of the images blended into and survived with the newer culture.

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For maps and illustrations of Easter Island, see *Geographical Journal*, May, 1917.